

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

At page 17, lines 7 to 26, please amend the paragraph as follows:

In another presently preferred alternate embodiment illustrated in Figure 22, the invention provides for a variable stiffness optical fiber shaft 110 that comprises an optical fiber 112 having a proximal end 114 with a fiber optic ferrule 115 attached over the optical fiber, and a distal end 116. The proximal end of the optical fiber may be polished for connection of the proximal end of the optical fiber to the fiber optic ferrule. The optical fiber is preferably of the type that is covered with an outer buffer layer, with the outer buffer layer being removed from a distal portion 119 of the optical fiber, leaving an exposed portion of the optical fiber for improved transmission of light and heat energy to the distal end of the optical fiber shaft. The optical fiber typically includes an optical fiber core and cladding, but may optionally comprise several optical fibers, and at least one outer polymer layer. The unit generally is referred to as an optical fiber, which is covered in a sheath 118 of at least one outer layer of a heat shrinkable polymer, such as polyethylene, PTFE, PEEK, PET or PPS, for example, although other similar heat shrinkable polymers or metallic material may also be suitable. A connecting hub 117 with a bayonet style connector or ANSI threading for connecting the variable stiffness optical fiber shaft to an optical light source (not shown) can be disposed over the outer